

Snapshots

From the editorial advisory board

Over 2,000 years ago, the Roman author and orator Marcus Cicero said, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues, but the parent of all others." What he failed to note is that gratitude may also be the shortest-living emotion.

Think about some of the various ways family and friends extend themselves on our behalf: They support us, feed us, clean up after us, transport us, watch our children, run our errands, make our lives more comfortable, and lend us stuff. Sadly, not only do we often forget to say thanks (it conveniently slips our minds), but we frequently forget to return the favors (*and the stuff*).

Although we might make a mental note to do something special for those kind and generous people, do we ever actually get around to it? Sometimes yes, but many times no.

Is this simply human nature, or are our societal mores crumbling? I'll leave that question to the sociologists, but I will share what I am grateful for: CU — the reason I moved to Colorado in 1975; skiing Rocky Mountain powder, which has kept me in Colorado; a handful of 30-year friendships I can always depend on; my poker buddies (who rejoice when I overplay my hands); two happy, healthy kids, who make me proud; and my folks, who have encouraged me my entire life. Thank you, thank you!

Jimmy Calano

We live in Boulder (or within commuting distance, I suppose). Little more needs to be said. When my wife and I first arrived here in 1981, a "No Whining!" sign seemed to hover, virtually, above the Flatirons, warning all who dared to complain to get a life. Stupid questions were greeted with well-deserved, but not ill-mannered giggles. Rarely did such questions receive straight answers — they were opportunities to burst angst-laden or stress-filled bubbles, so the uninitiated could join in the fun. With the possible exception of Time magazine reporters, most people got the joke (after all, visitors were often on vacation, which helped immensely).

Many of us still harbor secret feelings of being twice-blessed, by this place in the universe we share, and by the people who share it with us. Sure, every day presents new challenges, but without them, Boulder really would be life in a bubble surrounded by reality. The good news, and the most important reason I'm grateful to live here is that most of us continue to try to make our home town a place that welcomes diversity, has both passion and compassion, and strives to learn from its history in order to enhance its future.

Finally, I give thanks every time we refuse to tolerate intolerance and whenever we smile and shake our heads with wonder at someone who appears to be taking themselves way too seriously. Dope-slap, anyone?

Ed Byrne

The simple things, dwelled on properly, can calm the mind and fill your heart. A few from an ordinary morning, here at this house, prepare me for a true Thanksgiving:

The pink light of day break on the grey slabs across the valley, huge in my window, remind me that much beauty will remain no matter what we humans may do to the environment. Light on rock. Hard to change those. Those slabs of the Fountain Formation are the remains of ancient seabed tilted up through incalculable pressure and appear here at roughly 300 million years old. What role do we humans have in the creation and sustenance of the Earth? With the most tender of its elements, we have reason to be humble. Very humble.

On a more ordinary time scale, I weigh the sound of my husband huffing and puffing downstairs, just after his workout on the stationary bike in the basement. This is evidence of the awesome health that allows him to ride the Triple Bypass every summer. He once held his breath underwater for three full minutes to fake out the teenage boys at the hot tub of our favorite hotel in Cabo; in the distance, migrating whales spouted and rolled in the ocean. My husband is the finest father I ever met; his kindness to his son sometimes bring me to tears after what I withstood in my own early family.

A Stellar's Jay alights on the fence post in the garden — black crest with near indigo blue through the rest. It's time to put out some bird seed. My cat crouches low, behind my statue of St. Francis to spy on his quarry. My dog lectures me through the window with a fixed stare; her eyes in their black eyeliner, her plumed tail wagging; she is ready for her breakfast.

A girl, Lindsay Scott, was born on this day in 1976 and wrote a poem just before passing away in April of '93; it opened, "Hold on to what is good, even if it is a handful of earth..." Let's walk in Lindsay's shoes.

Anne B. Butterfield

I could go on and on about how I am grateful for my wife — and I'm sure she'll ask me to "count the ways" when she reads this. For now, I'll thank her for showing me, and occasionally reminding of, the importance of gratitude. Thanksgiving is her favorite holiday, as gratitude is about being thankful.

Recent psychological research has shown gratitude to be a fine virtue. "There are really tangible, concrete benefits to being grateful," says Professor Robert Emmons, a leading researcher in the field. As the New York Times reports, "health improves, relationships get better, people are more active and enthusiastic. ... Dr. Emmons said that even people who are lonely and isolated can become less so." Check out his most recent book on the subject, simply titled "Thanks!"

Brian Schwartz

With an abundant grape harvest this year, my husband and I reminisced about last year's bumper apple crop. Then, as we safely gathered in our fall garden produce, the words came to mind of the traditional Thanksgiving hymn, "Come, Ye Thankful People."

Our beautiful fall weather underscores life is good. I'm thankful for life and realize my successes aren't mine alone. I'm indebted to my family, my church, my communities over the years, our country and to God. I'm thankful for privileges my U.S. citizenship affords me. And despite my complaints, I see benefits in my struggles.

I'm thankful for my husband, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, in-laws and extended family. My mother wrote a book about her life she asked me to publish for the family. Now she's gone, that project still weighs on me but also lifts my spirits. I'm grateful for her telling our family of its Pilgrim roots. That makes Thanksgiving kind of a family remembrance day besides a day to be with family.

I treasure music, particularly classical. My mother filled my life with recorded classical music from an early age. One result is that Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee" is forever intertwined with my recovering on the couch from a tonsillectomy.

I marvel that tossing carrot seeds in the ground in the spring results in our digging carrots in the fall. Despite our tending to them, nothing we do can actually force those seeds to grow. It's a miracle I thankfully witness and enjoy.

Shirley Scoville

Back in the late 1940s my father, who was in his forties, owned a printing shop in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and it floundered. He had struggled with it for years and one day he announced that enough was enough and was planning to seek a new life in the United States. Fortunately, he had a well-to-do brother in Detroit who agreed to sponsor him and his entire family, meaning my mother, my only brother and me.

As I look back over these many years, I'm always grateful that he had the courage to pull up anchor and move to the United States.

Coming to the United States enabled me to receive a good college education, which eventually led me to jobs as a reporter, foreign correspondent and editor. Today, retired for eight years, after years in journalism and as a corporate executive, I'm delighted to write mini-editorials for the Camera. When working at the Detroit News, I met a lovely lass who happened to be the news editor's daughter. We married and had five children. We lost our youngest to a car accident many years ago, but the other four are doing well in their diverse careers. We have four grandchildren. I only wish that the three in the East lived closer so that they could join us for Thanksgiving. Our other son, wife, and their two boys live in nearby Broomfield. My education and working experience have led me to jobs all over the world.

I often wonder what I might have become had I remained in Brazil. But that is a "What if?" for which I have no answer.

Marc Raizman

(The Camera's editorial advisory board members are: Rick Beaufait, Anne B. Butterfield, Jimmy Calano, Ed Byrne, Clay Evans, Julian Friedland, Brian Lewis, Steve Pomerance, Marc Raizman, Brian T. Schwartz and Shirley Scoville.)

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Open forum

President Bush

It's time to step aside

Lead, follow or get out of the way." Thomas Paine had it right; in crucial moments one must choose one of the above. The world economy is at such a crucial moment.

To complicate matters it has come at a transition of administrations. President Bush must decide which he is going to do. Leading would be an interesting choice. Since that brief moment atop the rubble of the World Trade Center in September of 2001, Mr. Bush has failed by any measure to do that. Instead he has chosen to consistently follow the corrupt and false neo-con ideology, while Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld lead him to: war with Iraq, approval of torture, extraordinary rendition, domestic spying and suspension of habeas corpus.

He followed the lead of corporate America by continuing to deregulate the financial markets, protect the health insurance industry, and overpay pharmaceutical companies for Medicare medications...The list goes on.

So my question and assumption is, "why lead now?" Leadership requires addressing the problems at their root cause: Reaganomics and deregulation. It means renegotiating distressed loans as the FDIC has started to do. It means putting people to work by investing in the nation thus ensuring demand for consumer goods. However, this approach would entail admitting the failure of not just policy but of the conservative ideology and the Bush administration itself.

So far the Bush administration has continued to do just that. Cornered by their ideology they continue to bailout financial markets while ignoring the American worker. Henry Paulson continues to change course with alarming frequency, confirming their lack of strategy.

Meanwhile, Barack Obama is stepping up with a strategy. The question is should we wait until Inauguration Day to take action. There will be sufficient Congressional support to push legislation in January. Delaying it will only cause further damage to the economy. Delay would indicate a desire to leave a bigger mess for Obama in hopes of turning the next election in their favor. The right-wing is already trying to label the mess as the Obama Recession.

Come on Mr. Bush, it is time to get out of the way. The change we need is coming, you cannot stop it. Your obstruction will only cement your legacy of failure and corruption. Get out of the way. This is your last chance to actually lead.

*ROBERT LANCE
Boulder*

Hockey

Enhance popularity with more exposure

Disclaimer: This message does not pertain to Canadians or Avaholics.

I myself, being a former avid hockey player, love nothing more than watching my home team, the Tampa Bay Lightning. Whether I am front row, drawing obscene objects on the glass with my breath or at home witnessing the great game of hockey from my lazy boy, I feel the same excitement and intensity. Hockey is indeed a great game.

In the Northeast and Northwest, hockey is very prominent and for those that play and enjoy hockey, it is a way of life. Unfortunately, only the latter part of the last sentence holds true in the South. The southern climate forbids childhood "pond hockey" and in turn limit's the desire or need for community ice rinks making it more difficult for hockey to be a real childhood sport in the South.

Don't get me wrong though, hockey fans that do play hockey in the South, play with the same passion for the game as anywhere.

The ultimate problem keeping ice hockey from moving up in the American sports hierarchy is exposure. There is no Monday night hockey with Barry Melrose and Patrick Roy calling the play-by-play and Joe Sakic isn't trying to legally change his last name to "Uno Nueve."

It is time that true hockey fans rally and slash, check, or elbow our sport to national stardom by watching every single game on television. Good ratings will enhance the sport's exposure, but if this doesn't work and we must take measures into our own hands. Remember, fighting is only a five minute penalty.

*CHAD LINVILLE
Boulder*

Alzheimer's disease

The fight for a cure is far from over

We were gratified that Kelly Rogers and her family turned to the Alzheimer's Association for help and support as her father's journey with Alzheimer's progressed (Camera Guest Commentary, Nov. 20).

Gov. Bill Ritter proclaimed November as Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month in recognition of the 65,000 Coloradans living with the disease and the families who care for them.

The greatest risk for Alzheimer's is age but the disease is not a normal part of aging. One in seven over the age of 65 and 50 percent of those over 85 will develop this incurable disease. While many associate Alzheimer's with memory loss, symptoms also include disorientation, anxiety, a lack of sound judgment and difficulty with language.

While there is not yet a cure or drugs that can stop the progression of the disease, research is gaining ground. New diagnostic tools will allow us to detect the disease earlier in order for existing medications to begin addressing the symptoms,

perhaps delaying its progression, and increasing the quality of life for those facing a diagnosis.

Even clinical trials are showing promise, and those with a diagnosis can be first in line to find solutions sooner. Early detection also helps individuals and families plan as the disease impacts careers, the operation of the household, child rearing and tasks of daily living.

In the battle against this disease, the Alzheimer's Association offers education, support groups, counseling and a 24-hour help-line staffed by counselors trained to answer questions and provide referrals or simply a sympathetic ear when it's needed most.

We are close to finding answers to this devastating and fatal disease but the fight is far from over. Share our hope for a world without Alzheimer's and spend a few moments in your day with someone who has been touched by Alzheimer's disease.

LINDA MITCHELL

President & CEO, Alzheimer's Association of Colorado, Denver

Gas prices

Keep conserving for lower prices

Did you see it? Did you ...? It's right in front of you! Did you see gas prices fall after Americans changed their driving habits, practiced more carpooling, used more public transit, and saved gas?

Did you see gas prices plummet after Americans drove 40 billion fewer miles in only a few months? Can you hear that loud, sucking noise...again? That's the sound of the gas companies' profits coming back into our pockets.

Please, please, please continue to save money by keeping your new driving habits, practicing carpooling, using public transit, and saving gas. Can't you see it? It's so obvious.

*NAOMI WALLS
Aurora*

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To Write the Forum

The Camera welcomes readers' letters. Timely topics of local interest are given first preference. All letters are subject to editing.

Our guidelines:

- Letters of 300 words or fewer will receive preference
- Name, full address and daytime phone required
- No anonymous or "open" letters
- No name-calling or ad hominem attacks
- Each writer limited to one letter a month
- e-mail submissions are processed more quickly than hard-copy letters. Plain text preferred over attachments

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